



**City
Arts**

THE ART OF LIFE AND MOVEMENT

A handbook for activity
co-ordinators in residential homes

By Isabel and Rachel Jones
Salamanda Tandem March 2012

Working in partnership
with City Arts, Nottingham

Commissioned by
Nottinghamshire County
Council Arts Service



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FOREWORD

Kate Duncan and Alison Denholm – City Arts

After a successful pilot project looking at models of sustainable dance development with older adults in care settings, City Arts was commissioned by Nottinghamshire County Council to develop a follow up training programme accompanied by an information pack.

City Arts approached dance artist Isabel Jones from Salamanda Tandem to deliver the programme. Isabel is an experienced choreographer, cross art form artist and movement specialist. With Salamanda Tandem she tours and performs across the UK and abroad. She also delivers training programmes in enabling creativity for disabled and older people.

Isabel developed a training session to be delivered at Eton Park Care Home in Cotgrave. She consulted extensively with the Cotgrave Centre, linking in with the two activity co-ordinators who work there. With the support of Alison Denholm from City Arts she gained an understanding of life at the centre, the daily routine and was even able to see one of the unoccupied bedrooms, understanding the personal space that residents have.

In November 2011, Isabel led a 1 day training session focusing on 'Stimulating Imagination' and explored how to work creatively with older people resident in care homes through creative practice and the arts. Isabel also fostered discussion between the activity co-ordinators who attended the session, allowing them to discover what each individual home had on offer for residents; what their challenges were and successes.

The session explored how the use of simple resources can enable communication, the sharing of interests and stimulate discussion. A box of old greeting cards suggested how people with limited communication skills could choose and demonstrate which were their favourites. Leaves and flowers collected from a walk outside changed and personalised the atmosphere within the room, a box of interesting and tactile objects on a table stimulated discussion and triggered memories.

We also explored the more private space of a resident's bedroom. The centre had an empty room and the group spent time talking about how the space could be transformed and personalised. Through this, we also talked about the positive and negative impact of moving into a care home, the security of being within a safe and supported environment versus the loss of your own home and control over the environment.

Isabel then took the evaluation from the participants to inform the development of this handbook. This was a thoughtful and informative session, offering ways of working that were not beyond the reach of the activity co-ordinators and their tight budgets, yet offered something person centred and sensitive to support the wellbeing of the individuals living within the care system.

Thanks to all the participants at Eton Park Care Centre and Elder Homes Group for informing the development of this handbook.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Isabel Jones and Rachel Jones

Back in the 1940's, 50's and 60's, Rachel Jones was Head of Careers in Derbyshire; with a particular gift for seeing the natural talents in people and facilitating life choices that played to their strengths. She knew how to make the imaginative leaps necessary to help people go beyond disabling preconceptions and achieve their potential.

About 7 years ago Rachel was diagnosed with dementia and now depends on social services and her family for care support, however she still has a great deal to give and a strong desire to do it. Here in this pack she applies her imagination and art to provide creative solutions.



As we get older, and especially in a care environment it's as though our power is taken away, and what we have done has been forgotten. We've run homes, had families, run businesses and done amazing things with our lives, and all that is still inside us and we still want to make a contribution, help others and be appreciated.

Rachel Jones

Isabel Jones is Rachel's daughter and the co-founder and artistic director of Salamanda Tandem; an arts education charity, with a 21-year track record of enabling disabled and disadvantaged people to achieve wellbeing. Isabel is a singer/composer and dancer/choreographer, with an international reputation for her methods and practice in working people on the autistic spectrum, with deafblind people and with people with dementia and other severe disabilities. Going beyond the limits of a label, Isabel aims to nurture the underlying potential and to find imaginative ways that enable individuals to grow. She is the author of the book 'Dance and Disabled People' published by the national Foundation for Community Dance, and is an experienced yoga teacher. In this pack she applies her deep commitment to the health and wellbeing of vulnerable elders and their carers.

INTRODUCTION

This pack presents a number of practical ways in, moving across all the art forms; music, visual and tactile arts, music, movement and the art of daily life.

We've devised the ideas laid out here in practice with elders and tested them with a group of 16 activity co-ordinators who attended a training day held on November 30th 2011 at Eton Park Care Home in Cotgrave, Nottinghamshire.

As no training manual is ever complete without the people, and theory simply doesn't work without practice, we'd like you to start by considering;

Where do ideas come from?

A difficult question, but one thing we do know is that once we set up a dialogue between what we bring and what the person in front of us brings then ideas begin to flow. No manual can ever replace that!

Life is interesting if you know where and how to look. Life is stimulating if you are given the chance to take a lead.

Rachel Jones

This explains why the pack is a collaborative venture and why Salamanda Tandem's work is rooted in collaboration.

**OUR PURPOSE:
WELLBEING**

HOW WE DO IT - ENABLING PEOPLE TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL THROUGH THE ARTS

(*Salamanda Tandem 2011* ¹)

Fulfilling one's potential, making the most of whatever human gifts and abilities one has, is essential to our wellbeing.

Extensive research has established that wellbeing is associated not only with longevity, but also with quality of life, including resistance to disease. The Government's Foresight Report on *Mental Capital and Wellbeing*² identified five key behaviours in this area – the ways to wellbeing:

- 1. CONNECT**
- 2. BE ACTIVE**
- 3. TAKE NOTICE**
- 4. KEEP LEARNING**
- 5. GIVE**

Our approach is intended to promote the five ways to wellbeing, both as knowledge that people understand and value, but more importantly as behaviours that people enact on a daily basis, through independent choice and because they share the human values that underlie them.

Our purpose, in working with others to fulfil our potential - whatever our individual abilities or challenges - through an everyday practice of art, is always to support people's wellbeing and enhance their quality of life. It's both a practical and an important mission.

1 This purpose unites all Salamanda Tandem's activities and people– Development Plan 2011 - 2015 .

2 Foresight Report - Mental Capital and Wellbeing Published by The UK Government Office for Science 2008

Rachel bakes a cake on
stage as part of a dance
performance.

*Salamanda Tandem and
Eye Contact*



1. CONNECT

with the people around, with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours, at home, work, school or in the local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of life and invest time in developing them. Building and maintaining these connections will support and enrich life every day.

Sometimes we feel isolated from the world and we can't reach out into it, so we need others to bring the world 'in' to us, giving us stimulating choices and ways of making that outside world our own; for example music, good food, beautiful things to look at, and people. We need to touch them.

Rachel Jones

IDEAS

- **An interesting object or beautiful smell as a start for conversation**
- **The internet and social networking**
- **What about a telephone**
- **An activity sheet or 'sign up' list to stimulate interest**
- **Plan a trip out to an art gallery, nature centre or café**
- **Design a poster and activities for a seasonal event**
- **Doing things with others in company; a shared meal, chilling out**
- **Planting a tree, baking a loaf of bread**

2. BE ACTIVE

go for a walk, step outside, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes us feel good. Most importantly, discover an enjoyable physical activity that suits mobility levels and fitness.

I go out walking everyday on the university campus field at the back of my house and collect flowers, leaves and greenery – and I like to arrange things in different ways, a sprig here, a berry there, the first bright Jasmine flower that cheers me in the winter and cheers the visitors that come by to see me.

Rachel Jones

IDEAS

- **Some tactile objects collected**
- **Walking**
- **Feel the benefits of breathing**
- **A game of bowls**
- **A wood burner, log store and collecting sticks**
- **Building maintenance**

Photos Next Page - Left to Right, Top to Bottom:

A collection of objects and arranged on the training day by Eton Park's own activity co-ordinator. Photo: Alison Denholm

John Moulton at West Bridgford Bowls Club; participant in Salamanda Tandem's weekly movement 4 health class to support older or disabled bowlers to stay in the game for longer. Photo: Geoffrey Fielding.

Exhibition, creation and debate at The Water Tower in Northants. Salamanda Tandem 2010 Photo: Geoffrey Fielding

Exploring music, dance and technology at Rufford Abbey. Salamanda Tandem 2011. Photo: Geoffrey Fielding





Rachel's growing
Sculpture of everyday
things hanging by her
chair

3. TAKE NOTICE

be curious, catch sight of the beautiful, remark on the unusual, notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether walking, sitting, eating lunch or talking to others. Be aware of the world around and what you are feeling. Reflecting on experiences helps us appreciate what matters.

Unlike young people we aren't rushing around, so we can notice smaller things; the first snowdrop coming up, the timing of the birds leaving for winter, I've been watching them over there from my window and they have stayed and stayed this year. This makes the senses; smell, touch, sight, hearing all the more important.

Rachel Jones

IDEAS

- **A row of essential oils, a jug and a bowl**
- **A sculpture made out of cards**
- **Making choices without words**
- **Being creative; arranging things**
- **An array of pens and brushes**
- **Collecting things; life is a series of scrap books**
- **Create a room of your own**
- **An object as a start for a conversation**

4. KEEP LEARNING

try something new, rediscover an old interest, take on new responsibilities. Fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving, learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

We need things to develop our imagination and educate us; Radio 4, a book club, a daily newspaper, the internet, books, talks, debates and conversations about interesting things. This creates room for our inner world to open up. This is a marvelous thing if we can tap into it.

Rachel Jones

IDEAS

- **The Radio**
- **Magazines and books**
- **Talking books**
- **Learn the benefits of movement**
- **Games**
- **Fidget stuff, things to sit with e.g. tactile objects like beads or a stone**
- **Quiet spaces for listening**
- **A shed or a workshop with things to fix just like you've always done**

Rachel out at Attenborough Nature Reserve, a shelf of books and magazines by her side



Rachel with her fidget stuff; raffia, paper, string, coloured paper clips, pieces of card, discarded paper



Geoffrey in his shed. Might need modifying a bit when he's ready for a residential home! But it's a bit chaotic and surely that's the point.





Photos - Left to Right, Top to Bottom:
Two of Rachel's most recent paintings. Left 'Nathan' a visitor who she sponsored to go and volunteer. Right: 'Jasmine' one of her carers

An arrangement made by one of the activity co-ordinators on Isabel's training day. Photo Alison Denholm

Lewis (pictured right) teaches Paddy his grandson a game, The Fox and The Geese

A base raises the fire off the floor to make the fire more accessible, for ease of building it and keep the fire alight

The Water House Cat



5. GIVE

do something nice for a friend, or a stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time or join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

As we get older, and especially in a care environment it's as though our power is taken away, and what we have done has been forgotten. We've run homes, had families, run businesses and done amazing things with our lives, and all that is still inside us and we still want to make a contribution, help others and be appreciated.

Rachel Jones

IDEAS

- **Teach someone a new game**
- **Being useful, make suggestions, problem solving**
- **Watering the plants**
- **Potting up for the seasons**
- **Flowers, twigs and stones picked from the garden and arranged for everyone to enjoy**
- **Pets to look after e.g. rabbits or a cat**
- **Bird tables and bird feeders**
- **Take part in fundraising activities**
- **Conservation and nature; choosing bulbs and where to put them, being in tune with the seasons e.g. a bluebell wood, wild garlic, a cowslip meadow**
- **Guided listening sessions**
- **Photographing what others do**
- **Collecting wood, lighting a fire to keep people warm and cheer the spirits**

TWO DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

In this section we want to explore why dreaming up ideas in isolation may seem easy but why it's often so hard to make anything happen in practice.

Q1. If it was that easy then why aren't we already doing it?

During the rainy day with activity co-ordinators, this question cropped up a few times and the following barriers were identified;

- **The elders we work with lack energy and motivation**
- **The elders we work with don't want to join in**
- **Families aren't interested**
- **Ethos of care homes**
- **Lack of time and resources**

Energy levels are one of the key factors here.

When I'm stressed I'll probably find a way to shut down – I think that's how I ended up with dementia because my life became too complicated. I got tired, but I can be re-energised with fresh air! What I like is an imaginative, listening, interested in me and the world, approach. But I know there isn't always time for that.

Rachel Jones

Q2. How do people end up feeling low on energy, passive, like a coach potato, or unmotivated?

When nothing reflects us anymore, when people get on with everything without us and we feel redundant.

Rachel Jones

A key point we know about energy is that it is harder to move where there is inertia. We also know that when people become passive, lose control over their lives and a 'done to', 'done for' culture prevails, people lose their motivation. Carers work hard and sometimes it can feel like an uphill struggle to achieve the daily tasks we face, we may think it's quicker to do it ourselves when we are short of time but it's only made worse when the people we work with aren't engaged with us.

Passivity is a crippling disease but the question is: Where does it come from? The institution? or the person? Whether a resident or a carer, we all want to see ourselves as 'active participants' not 'passive recipients' – when, where and how does this ambition fade or just disappear?

CONSIDER THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY TO YOU

Our environment is very important to us; a room of our own, things of our own, arranged and refreshed with new things that provide variation and interest. Every home needs a view out of a window where we can observe change happen, the seasons, people, the air, the light and pick up on the energy of life.

Rachel Jones

It's a well-known phenomena that when people are held hostage, in prison or solitary confinement that the psychological affects of having ones identity stripped away are often greater than the physical hardship. If someone has dementia or if they are elderly and their interactions with the world are reduced it becomes even more important that we have stimulating new things and objects of reference all around us. These things trigger conversation, imagination, positivity, creativity and memory.

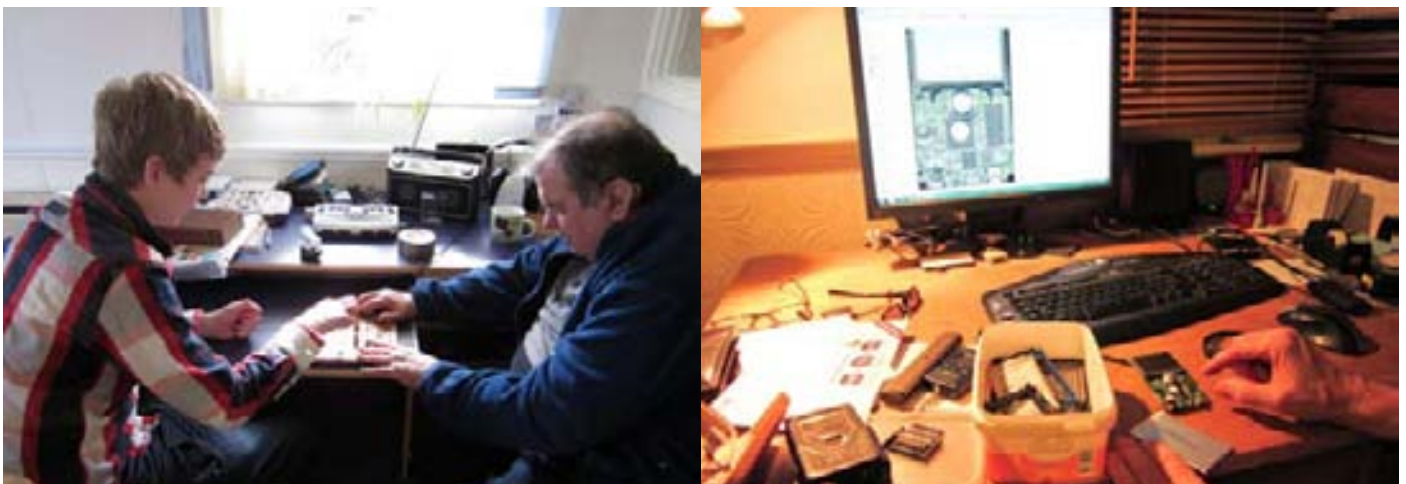
Activity co-ordinators are well placed to make a difference here, in supporting residents to create rooms and places that are tailored towards them. Some useful thoughts when considering how to approach this work are:



Isabel's room at home in Nottinghamshire

Q. How much does this room / residential home tell us about the occupant (s), and what makes this the home of individuals not just the hotel you never check out of.

Have a look at the following photographs and see what these rooms tell you about the person who lives there. Think about a room you have created and why / how it reflects you.



A radio, a braille computer, a stone to handle, a braille magazine, a chess set, the insides of a recording device, a box of miscellaneous items, lots of different pairs of glasses all within easy reach.



A telephone, a view, phone numbers, cards, letters, a pot of pens, brushes and hangers

Home: starts with the person who lives there, and what is around them, home is a place of ones own, a sense of self, a bit of chaos, things left out, signs of individual people, a life worth living it's a simple feeling of happiness to be there.

Rachel Jones

MAKING A ROOM OF ONES OWN – DOING THINGS ‘WITH’ NOT ‘FOR’ PEOPLE

As part of the training course in Cotgrave, the entire group of 16 took over an empty bedroom. We asked participants to take a pile of post it notes, then look around the space and post up their ideas written on the notes directly onto objects or onto parts of the room. The idea was that each object could be personalised so that it reflected the occupant.



Here is a list of some of the ideas that came up and some more:

A hanging at the window

Things to catch the light

A series of switches to make choices between radio and favourite music

A personalised room number / name

A choice of paint

Bedsread

Natural objects

Collections of things

Photographs

Loved furniture

Curtains

Plants on the windowsill inside and outside

Changes in light

A fish tank

Paintings, drawings you have done or others you know

Flowers you have arranged or dried

Cards and things sent through the post made into a sculpture

Loved china or crockery

A computer

Computer bits

Games

A drawer of miscellaneous items

A table to entertain someone

Essential oils, or special smelling things

Books and Magazines

A telephone

The Internet

An ensuite bathroom

An arrangement of interesting or handmade tiles

Candle Light

Incense

A book/with a collection of images, tickets, photographs, phrases, objects, letters, notes that reflect you

A bedside lamp

Hand made coat hangers

Own coloured towels

A mirror and fairy lights

Digital photo frame

A picture on the wall

Door Knocker

Dressing Table and jewellery

A bar and choice of favourite drinks and nibbles

A mug in fact two so you can entertain and a kettle

A fur rug, a homemade rug, a present from someone who loves you

A plant to water and nurture

Voile curtains with pockets for little buttons or things to add

Window stickers and jells

Window boxes outside

A bird table nearby

A cushion

A shelf to put things on

A fireplace

En-suite

Bedspread

Hand made Chandelier

Create a new list with a resident; even use this list to allow residents to expand their ideas.

- **Dream it for themselves**
- **Create it for themselves**
- **Create it with others**

LET'S DO THINGS 'WITH'
NOT 'FOR' OTHERS

THINGS LEFT OUT FOR LATER



A Christmas decoration that Rachel didn't want to come down made over several months by Dominic and Rachel Jones

As part of the training day, participants created some beautiful sculptures with found objects picked up around the grounds, fir cones, the last hydrangea heads, twigs, leaves, herbs, and put together with the objects that Salamanda Tandem brought along, drift wood, shells, stones, postcards. A wide array of possibilities unfolded.

These things cost nothing but were stunning and looking at the photographs too, could become the starting point for making a room of ones own. During lunch Salamanda Tandem took things out to the residents who were captivated. They played around and re-arranged the objects and placed them on their tables. Old fake flowers in vases, or even fresh flowers if not well chosen can create a fusty / institutional feeling, whereas these things invited conversation and interest as the outside world was brought in. For example one resident remarked that it was unusual to find such a fresh flowering hydrangea in late November which started up an interesting conversation between 4 or 5 residents sitting at a table– such thoughts on our changing climate and the seasons are the stuff of TV programmes, websites and magazines.



Photos taken on the
training day of natural
art made by activity
coordinators. Photos by
Alison Denholm



I like to bring the outside world in to keep in touch with the world; temperature, light, nature, the seasons, people and movement, it's stimulating and sparks up thought and conversation.

Rachel Jones

It was explained after the day that everything would be cleared up, thrown in the bin and the chairs reset around the edges of the room. We were all sad about this, as it seemed a shame that some of the things couldn't have been left for the residents to enjoy, re-arrange and add too. So using postcards Salamanda Tandem illustrated how beautiful pictures could be created by residents for the home with a sense of their individual identity imprinted on them. Below is a photograph taken of one of the objects picked that day – the original flowers are dried now and stand in pride of place on the mantle piece of Salamanda Tandem's yoga studio alongside some simple squeeze pots and a stone.

It was suggested that a room be chosen specifically for the activities so that things could be left out and materials accessible; whether a shed, a workshop, a wood store, a shelter. As any creative person knows it's not always possible or even desirable to finish something in one sitting.



The last
hydrangea from
the training day
dried. Photo:
Isabel Jones

SUMMING UP: WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

We would like to offer two solutions for everyone to start increasing their 'energy'

- 1. To have 'energy', we must have a stake in what we are doing and in our environment and in our life**
- 2. To have 'energy' we must breathe**

More than 3,000 years ago our yoga ancestors discovered the power of the breath and how one of the most important healing yogic affects is received via the breath. By increasing oxygen into the lungs and then on into the whole system, the body begins to feel better, the mind becomes calm and the body begins to feel more lively. When things get out of balance; the mind racing with anxiety, the body exhausted and tired with life, we feel depressed. In yoga, we learn simple breathing techniques to reverse this cycle.

Try it now for yourself

Breathe
Breathe
Breathe

Close your eyes and notice how with the gentle expansion of the ribs, your mind becomes quieter, less anxious, more focussed, happier. You feel less sedentary as the oxygen gives food to the brain.

Human beings depend on the breath for life, as we get older our posture can start to collapse, our arteries begin to fur up etc... all reducing our capacity to breathe. When less air comes in we feel depressed. Think of how we hold ourselves when depressed stooped over as though we carry a heavy burden. One of the biggest problems of modern times is that our minds race whilst our bodies get taken over by inertia. Have you ever felt that? This is why yoga practitioners advocate for stretching as it keeps our bodies both malleable and open to receive the breath.

Try simply stretching a part of your body now for yourself and

Breathe
Breathe
Breathe

You might in a moment feel like taking a walk, if you've been doing this with someone else they might also feel like going out into the world with you. A daily walk, a dose of fresh air sparks interest, awareness, and something to bring back and give to others.

MOVEMENT IS LIFE AND LIFE IS MOVEMENT

CONCLUSION

We started the training course first thing in the morning by asking 2 things;

Q1. What makes us feel good in life - A Life Worth Living?

We found that by looking at what we would like for ourselves, we also find out quite easily what others would like too. Empathy is a key way in which we listen to others. Have a read of the following list made by participants on the day to see if you agree.

- **Owning our own home, a vegetable patch, car, laptop**
- **Having some money to spend**
- **Attachment to people, people who love/like us and friendships**
- **Feeling attractive**
- **Feeling as though we are important**
- **Feeling listened to**
- **Being connected to the world and to people**
- **Movement**
- **Feeling energised**
- **Feeling useful and valued**

Q2. What makes us feel bad in life?

- **Uniforms**
- **Not being listened to**
- **Being bored**
- **Not having control**
- **Lack of stimulation**
- **Feeling trapped**
- **A poor environment**
- **No money of our own**
- **Food we don't like**

Consider how you would feel if you lived in the care home you work in – do these words sum it up? Our priority is to make residents feel safe, secure, cared for, welcome and respected. We want our residents to feel truly at home, with a comfortable place to live, lots to do, fantastic food, and in a place where their dignity and privacy is respected at all times.

David Messenger Managing Director Elder Homes Group



What it feels like - to be an old 'critter'

Glad to be lazy! and 'to dream'. Look at the sky, have no need to write lists of "To Do-----"

But sad too

People will talk and plan, and tell of events they liked (possibly with someone else)

You may look and see things you hoped to see or do, but time passed by and you did not, or could not!

They may talk and miss you out – or speak quietly to others. You are no longer relevant or important? They need to look forward! To a time when you will no longer be around!

Good

No need to write lists of To Do!

You might not be there to cheer when they were done

So why not just dream!

Rachel Jones 2012



SALAMANDA TANDEM



Salamanda Tandem is an arts education charity, with a 21-year track record of helping disabled and disadvantaged people to achieve wellbeing. In particular we work with people our society finds hard to reach including:

- **Children on the autistic spectrum**
- **Learning disabled adults**
- **Deaf blind people**
- **Elders and people with Dementia**

But we go beyond the limits of a label to nurture the underlying potential, to find imaginative ways that enable individuals to grow. In the words of two young people we regularly work with:

'Doing that has made me forget my disabilities'

'Is it really me? My voice is so good, I'd like the world to hear it like this.'

Our work encompasses dance, music, film, visual art and sensory environments. It is led by professional, experienced artists, who work with education and health staff and disabled people, to offer inclusive, tailored arts experiences to participants of all abilities.

Although we use established methods, each project is new so it may involve research, evaluation and even training. We aim to achieve excellent artistic experiences, whatever scale, timeframe or environment we are working in.

Appreciation of everyone's creative contribution is at the heart of all our activities. We put that into practice by providing the necessary means for the people we work with to both express themselves and communicate with others.

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City Arts Nottingham aims to develop and inspire arts participation that brings people together, stimulates change and creates stronger, healthier communities.

This aim stems from our belief that participation in the arts can enrich and transform people's lives and we have been pioneering innovative and creative approaches for over 30 years.

City Arts has a community focused approach to the development of the arts and its staff. Commissioned artists have a wide range of skills to enable them to work with groups or individuals, including some who are very disaffected, face particular barriers to inclusion, or have personal issues that can be supported through the arts.

To achieve our aims we:

- **Direct resources towards creative work with vulnerable and marginalized groups including at risk young people, exiled communities, people with enduring mental health issues and others with specific needs**
- **Develop outdoor arts that happen in accessible community spaces, raise the profile of the arts and encourage wide audience engagement**
- **Develop programmes and partnerships that enable participants to access wider cultural, learning, volunteering and employment opportunities**
- **Support artists with training and resources to achieve the highest quality artistic and social outcomes in our programmes**
- **Advocate for the benefits of participation in the arts through partnership work and by developing and disseminating research-based evidence**
- **Ensure sustainability is based on robust business models and the continuous building of new markets**

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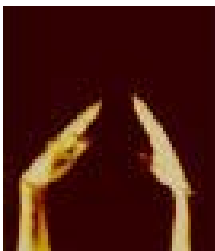
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This report is one of three practical handbooks that carers, health professionals and support workers can use to develop creative activities with individuals and groups.



City Arts is supported by:

